(b) if so, whether Defence Ministry surrendered Rs.7000 crores this fiscal year which was highest in five years;

(c) if so, what were main reasons therefor;

(d) whether red tape was one of the reasons for delay in defence purchases; and

(e) if so, to what extent Government has taken steps in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (e) Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) aims to ensure expeditious procurement of approved requirements of the Armed Forces in terms of capability sought within the time-frames prescribed by optimally utilizing allocated budgetary resources. There is a provision to review the procurement procedure after every two years. It has now been decided that in order to infuse greater transparency and to encourage involvement of indigenous industry in defence procurement and to keep pace with changing times, a review of DPP may be undertaken annually.

During the financial year 2008-2009, a cut of Rupees 7000 crores (approximately) was imposed by Ministry of Finance at the Revised Estimates stage and it was not a surrender by Ministry of Defence.

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

1985. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has taken the initiative to bring together littoral States in the region on the issue of regional maritime environmental protection under the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium;

(b) whether the US and UK have sought observers status at Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and whether a similar request from China is pending; and

(c) whether the United Arab Emirates has agreed to host the second IONS in 2010, and if so, the agenda thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) With a view to achieving a state of security, safety and stability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) has been launched by the Indian Navy with navies (and maritime security organizations in respect of countries who do not have any formal Navy) of the IOR.

(b) While the navies of UK and USA have forwarded requests seeking 'Observer' status in IONS, no such request has been received from the Chinese Navy.

(c) United Arab Emirates (UAE) has agreed to host the IONS in the year 2010. The agenda for this meet has not been finalized.

Estimated value for defence procurement

1986. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the size of Defence procurement contemplated by Government is estimated to be to the tune of worth USD 30 billion;

(b) if not, the estimated value of proposed procurement;

(c) whether certain critical areas where India's security vulnerability are high but defence capability is low have been identified and duly prioritized in procurement proposals;

(d) if so, salient details thereof;

(e) the details of commitment made, if any, to former Soviet block countries in the matter of awarding contracts for procurement from them; and

(f) if so, nature of such promises and conditions attached, if any thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) A provision of Rs.40367.72 crores (US Dollar 8.5 billion approximately) in respect of procurement under capital acquisition has been made in the Budget Estimate for the year 2009-2010.

(c) and (d) A modernisation plan in the form of Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP), 5 years Services Capital Acquisition Plan (SCAP) and Annual Acquisition Plan (AAP) is prepared with due consideration to our security concerns, perspective defence capabilities and equipment profile. This plan is prioritized in the light of operational exigencies.

(e) and (f) Do not arise.

Sexual harassment of female officers in Indian Armed Forces

1987. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:
SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:
Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Major General Ex General Officers Commanding, 3 Infantry Division was dismissed on charges of sexual harassment of a Captain;

(b) if so, how many such cases have been reported during the last five years;

(c) the details thereof and the action taken thereon; and

(d) the steps taken to stem the rot?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) An officer of the rank of Major General has been sentenced to be dismissed from service after trial by a General Court Martial on the charges of sexual harassment of a lady officer. However, the sentence has not been confirmed due to the directions of the hon'ble High Court of Rajasthan.

During the last five years, eleven cases relating to allegations of sexual harassment have been reported in the Armed Forces. Necessary investigations/Court of Inquiry/General Court Martial (GCM) have been instituted in these cases. Punishments have been awarded, wherever, the charges have been proved.